

Paul soon gave offense to some of the brethren by his leniency in the conditions of church membership imposed upon the gentile converts; but he went to Jerusalem and gave such convincing testimony that his work was approved by God, that, with Peter's testimony of his own experience, the apostles sent Paul back to Antioch with letters borne by personal messengers testifying their approval of his work.

After a short rest in Antioch, Paul and Barnabas determined to go and visit the churches they had established, to encourage and to strengthen them. But a sharp contention having occurred between them because of John Mark, Paul started out with Silas to visit the work in Asia Minor. But he was not content to merely visit the work already established. He was on the right way, and new desires to extend the work took possession of him, and Providence showed him the way. For we are told that he " essayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered him not"; but when he had pushed on to Troas,—perhaps after months or years of labor and suffering, he had a vision which he interpreted as a Divine summons to carry the gospel of salvation into Europe. This was a decision fraught with most vital consequences to Europe and through Europe to America, and through Europe and America to the world.

One fact connected with this Macedonian mission that should be of interest to us as women, was that the first convert was a woman; and Dr. Stalker says, "The women pressed in large numbers into the Christian Church. This was a good omen; it was a prophecy of the happy change in the lot of woman which Christianity was to produce in the nations of the West."

Paul would doubtless have enjoyed a season of rest among these sturdy, faithful, generous Macedonians, but he was by persecution hurried on from town to town till he had visited and made converts in the principal towns in Macedonia and Achaia, including Athens and Corinth, the intellectual and commercial centers of Greece.

During his third journey he spent much time in Ephesus, an important commercial center, but wholly devoted to the worship of the goddess Diana; but he also made a flying visit to the churches previously established.

During this second visit to Greece he sent word to the Romans that they should see him soon. Then he hastened to Jerusalem, "deaf to the entreaties of friendship and blind to the tears of love"; for his friends entreated him with tears not to go; but to avoid the dangers that the Spirit had told him awaited him there.

We are all doubtless familiar with the details of his arrest at Jerusalem, his imprisonment at Caesarea, his appeal to Caesar that made it possible to accomplish his purpose to see Rome; of his imprisonment in Rome, which time was spent in giving the word of life to those who were allowed to visit him there, and in writing to his churches letters that have been and are still among "the most uplifting intellectual forces of the world."

But I have given hardly a hint of what it cost Paul to accomplish his task of laying the foundation of Christian missions.

Listen, while he is forced by circumstances to count the cost as he compares himself to some false teachers: "In labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one; thrice was I beaten with rods; once was I stoned; thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger, and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness,"—all this besides the burden that his churches laid upon his heart.

Now, since Christian principles were the same then as now, since unregenerate human nature is practically the same in all lands and in all ages, and since therefore the problems of the missionary were the same then as today, a close study not only of the book of the Acts of the Apostles but especially of Paul's epistles is practically a necessity to all who aspire to missionary work.

But before we can rightly understand these things we must have the spirit of Christ; for these things are spiritually discerned.

What was the spirit of Christ? He saved a lost and ruined world. To save it he had the spirit to surrender the riches of heaven and become poor; he had the spirit to endure hardships, and toil, and humiliation, and ingratitude, and even death, that the end might be accomplished.

When the Church has this spirit as Paul had it, the evangelization of the world will be almost accomplished. "The gospel does not save when it is simply received." "The only way to serve God is to help man."

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THE DULL PATH.

It is one of the greatest blessings in life that there should be some duties that are dull to us, and that some things should be irksome in the wrestle for truth and life, and in the search after God. I have no doubt it was a little dull for Moses climbing up Mount Sinai in the broiling heat of the desert, a little dull and weary, too, but he had to climb to the summit to open communion with God. It has no doubt been dull for many a child to come to the house of God, and it is dull for many a young man who thinks he will be happier on his bicycle on a Sunday morning, and it is dull for the business man, who is weary with the routine of the week—it is dull for us all. I grant you that, but it is the dull path that leads to heaven. It is not the primrose path of dalliance, it is not the following of your own pleasure, and taking your own way, and seeking to keep life one long prolonged dream and blissful sensation, but it is rising and climbing step by step and hand by hand, over the craggy paths of prayer and communion with God that at last brings us into the upper air and the open table-land where the face of God is clear and communion can be held.—Selected.

Only the man with the yearning soul is of any account with the evangel.